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PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIRST REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND UTILIZATION OF MINERAL RESOURCES IN AFRICA

1. It will be recalled that the first regional conference on the development and utilization of mineral resources in Africa held in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, during February 1981 called upon African countries to co-operate in the development and utilization of their mineral resources in the following main area: the building up of the technical knowledge of the mineral resources base; the development of capabilities for mineral extraction and processing and for marketing of mineral products; development of intra-African markets for minerals and mineral products; manpower development; development of mineral exploration, mining and processing equipment industries; research and development; creation of financing investment and insurance institutions; and the protection of the environment. Moreover, the ECA secretariat was requested to undertake some studies and organise workshops, study tours, etc. for member States aimed at facilitating the implementation of the Arusha conference recommendations by member States.

2. It will further be recalled that the Sixth meeting of the Lusaka-based MULPOC Council of Ministers held in Mbabane, Kingdom of Swaziland in February 1983 decided that:

(a) member States would inform the secretariat on progress made in the implementation of the Arusha recommendations at the national levels, prior to meetings of the MULPOC organs, to enable the secretariat to include such information in this report;

(b) a subregional committee on mineral resources development composed of representatives of the member States should be established to monitor and review annually, among other things, the implementation of the Arusha Conference recommendations; and

(c) the ECA secretariat should intensify collaboration with the SADCC secretariat and the member State of SADCC (Zambia) responsible for the co-ordination of mineral resources development among the SADCC member States so as to accelerate the rate of mineral development and utilization in the subregion.

3. Up to the time this report was prepared (December 1983) nocinformation had been received by the secretariat from any member State regarding the implementation of the Arusha conference recommendations. On the other hand the secretariat is in the process of undertaking consultations with relevant national institutions and the secretariat of SADCC with a view to establishing a subregional committee on mineral resources.

4. During 1983 the secretariat undertook the following actions intended to promote the implementation of the Arusha conference recommendations: continued support to the Eastern and Southern African Mineral Resources Development Centre; preparation and distribution to member States of the oil and gas map of Africa; promotion of co-operation between African countries and those of Latin America in the development of their mineral resources; and the organisation of a regional workshop on the role of coal in accelerated African economic growth.

5. Support to the Eastern and Southern African Mineral Resources Development Centre by the secretariat included such actions as the provision of administrative and technical support to the institution; the promotion of participation by the countries of the subregion in the activities of the centre; and the promotion of donors support to the Centre. The institution, continued to experience serious difficulties largely because many of the countries of the subregion are not participating in its establishment and operation.

6. The regional workshop on the role of coal in accelerated African economic growth was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia during July 1983. The workshop deliberated on various issues related to coal development and utilization in Africa and it is hoped that the report of the workshop which has already been distributed to member States will enhance co-operation by African countries in the development of these resources.

7. With regard to Africa-Latin America co-operation in mineral resources development, the report of the study tour of African specialists to Latin America (October 1982) was distributed to member States during 1983 with a request for information from the countries regarding ideas on areas of co-operation between the two regions, to enable the secretariat prepare a comprehensive study on this subject. The secretariat wishes to appeal to those countries which have not as yet responded to do so in good time so that the study can reflect the ideas of their countries.

8. Towards the end of 1984 the secretariat plans to organize a regional workshop on the role of copper in the accelerated economic growth of Africa in tandem with the second regional conference on the development and utilization of mineral resources in Africa. It is hoped that member States will actively participate in these activies.